



Bryce Yokomizo  
Director

September 5, 2002

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director  
Department of Public Social Services

Robert Ryans, Director  
Department of Community and Senior Services

Timothy Gallagher, Director  
Department of Parks and Recreation

**SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF TOY LOAN PROGRAM AT EXISTING COUNTY FACILITIES - BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MOTION, AUGUST 6, 2002 - AGENDA ITEM #16**

### **BACKGROUND**

On August 6, 2002, your Board instructed the Director of Public Social Services, in conjunction with the Directors of Community and Senior Services and Parks and Recreation to:

1. Explore the feasibility of implementing the Toy Loan Program in various County facilities, such as, but not limited to, senior centers, community service centers or parks, and;
2. Report back to the Board within 30 days on the status of the program.

## **RESPONSE**

In response to your Board's request, representatives from the Departments of Public Social Services, Community and Senior Services, and Parks and Recreation met to assess and formulate a strategy for implementing new Toy Loan centers at various new facilities throughout the County.

A number of factors were assessed in order to determine the suitability of opening toy libraries in each of these facilities. Among them were local need and accessibility to the community, the availability of secure space, local volunteers, and the compatibility with existing programs within each facility.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANNED SITES**

DPSS will continue to expand its Toy Loan Program. For example, during this calendar year, the Department has added six additional Toy Loan centers. Further, the Departments identified ten new locations throughout the County where Toy Loan centers will be implemented (Attachment I). The Departments of Community and Senior Services and Parks and Recreation will each implement five Toy Loan centers at existing parks and community centers, resulting in two new centers per Supervisorial District to supplement the existing 41 centers throughout the County.

All new toy libraries will continue to be modeled after the existing program (Attachment II) to ensure quality customer service and maintain uniformity. Beginning October 1, 2002, we will be phasing in the opening of these new centers, with the final site to open by November 15, 2002. Each new center will be publicized through announcements to local schools and agencies in order to create community awareness.

The following is a list of the planned centers within each Department:

### **Community And Senior Services**

- **Centro Maravilla Service Center, Los Angeles**
- **East Rancho Dominguez Service Center, Compton**
- **San Fernando Valley Service Center, Van Nuys**
- **San Pedro Service Center, San Pedro**
- **Santa Clarita Valley Service Center, Newhall**

**Parks And Recreation**

- **City Terrace Park, Los Angeles**
- **Athens Park, Los Angeles**
- **El Cariso, Sylmar**
- **Adventure Park, Whittier**
- **Loma Alta Park, Altadena**

There are additional County and community facilities that could potentially house Toy Loan centers. As a result, we will continue our work in seeking out additional sites for future development. In addition, we will also continue to identify new sources for toys and other related supplies to meet the needs resulting from this expansion.

BY/TG/RR:gb

**Attachments**

- c:     **Chief Administrative Officer**  
          **County Counsel**  
          **Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors**

## **PLANNED TOY LOAN CENTERS BY DEPARTMENT**

### **DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND SENIOR SERVICES**

- **Centro Maravilla Service Center** - Karen Olen, Director  
4716 Cesar Chavez Avenue, Los Angeles, 90022 • (323) 260-2805
- **East Rancho Dominguez Service Center** - Greg Robinson, Director  
4513 E. Compton Boulevard, Compton, 90221 • (310) 603-7401
- **San Fernando Valley Service Center** - Deborah Shepler, Director  
7555 Van Nuys Boulevard, Van Nuys, 91405 • (818) 901-3501
- **San Pedro Service Center** - Jacqueline Boone, Director  
769 West Third Street, San Pedro, 90731 • (310) 519-6091
- **Santa Clarita Valley Service Center** - Gloria Lupe Lopez, Director  
24271 San Fernando Road, Newhall, 91321 • (661) 254-0070

### **DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

- **City Terrace Park** - Alice Gonzales, Director  
1126 North Hazard Avenue, Los Angeles, 90063 • (323) 260-2371
- **Athens Park** - Jerold Benabale, Director  
12603 South Broadway Street, Los Angeles, • 90061 (323) 241-6700
- **El Cariso** - Jan Lang, Director  
13100 Hubbard Street, Sylmar, 91342 • (818) 367-7050
- **Adventure Park** - Dingo Mercado, Director  
10130 South Gunn Avenue, Whittier, 90605 • (562) 698-7645
- **Loma Alta Park** - Penny Daniels, Director  
3330 North Lincoln Avenue, Altadena, 91001 • (626) 794-8811

## Toy Loan Program Fact Sheet

In the summer of 1934, during the Great Depression, the manager of a dime store in southwest Los Angeles noticed two young boys wandering around his store, and discovered they were pocketing small toys and materials that could be used to construct toys. The boys were apprehended and referred to the Probation Department. Probation staff then spoke to the principal of the school they attended and found that the boys had good records, but their families could not afford many toys. Together, the store manager, school principal, and Probation staff decided something must be done to prevent them from becoming delinquents, and the idea of gathering toys and loaning them to children was conceived.

The first Toy Loan Center opened May 6, 1935 in a garage near Manchester Park. The basic ground rules were developed. Toys would be loaned on a weekly basis, and a record would be kept of every toy borrowed. The children would be graded on the care of their borrowed toy, receiving a satisfactory mark for returning their toy on time and in good condition. After 20 good marks, s/he would attain the status of *Honor Borrower*, which entitled the child to a gift from the *Honor Cabinet*. In addition, the Toy Loan Honor Code was established to teach honesty, responsibility, courtesy, and integrity.

Sixty-five years after the first Toy Loan Center opened, the program remains virtually unchanged. There are still no membership dues and fines are not imposed for late returns. For a child to borrow toys, all that is required is an application card signed by a parent or responsible adult.

Individuals, groups, and a few toy manufacturers donate all the toys used by the program and the centers continue to be run independently by volunteers. They are located in parks or recreation facilities, children's centers, libraries, housing projects, community service buildings, and one in a homeless shelter. Each center is different from the others, but all adhere to the basic tenets.

Currently, the Toy Loan Program supplies toys to 41 centers throughout LAC and is a resource for some 150 teachers, educators, school psychologists, and County personnel who borrow toys, books, and games to enhance learning and stimulate communication in therapy. Over 30,000 children are served annually by the various services offered by the program.

While the program depends on monetary and toy donations from the public and private sectors, the County does provide a headquarters facility and a delivery truck. Toys are sorted, cleaned and repaired if necessary, at the headquarters, then distributed to the various centers. At any given time, there are approximately 45,000 toys in circulation and at the headquarters facility.

Almost from the beginning, the Toy Loan Program has been jointly operated with the Toy Loan Advisory Board – a non-profit organization, chartered by the State of California. It is comprised of private citizens who volunteer their time and energy by soliciting donations, operating toy lending centers, and assisting in administering the program. In addition the Board promotes Toy Loan and recommends general policies vital to the success of the program.